

APRIL 6, 1972

Congress is threatening to expand the minimum wage act that applies to farm workers. The next swath sounds like it'll take in everyone's help. Every wet-eared blabbermouth in the country has been screaming save the environment. It sure doesn't sound like anyone is trying to save the rancher's environment.

Before Congress can change the labor laws for the Shortgrass Country, they're going to have to get the permission of the Interscholastic League and the Border Patrol. The school athletic schedules control the school kids' time and the Border Patrol handles the flow of un-papered aliens through the country. So in order to set any new standards, the politicians are going to have to talk to those two groups. That is, unless they want to hire one of those spooky medium hombres who claim they can talk to dead cowboys.

Filling in the forms is going to be as hard as paying the new wage scale. You know for certain the question is going to be asked about how many man hours were worked on your farm (ranch) last year.

I won't be able to truthfully say how many man hours were worked on this ranch yesterday. An old kid stood around here three months last spring without working one man hour. He'd made three paydays before I realized that a better replacement could be found at the wax museum.

That's what makes ranchers envious of rodeo clowns. The clowns use dummies and trained dogs for secretaries. When a dummy gets in the way, it can be thrown over the fence; dogs, of course, can be put in the kennel.

Not much can be done with humans that vapor lock in the middle of the gate. You could move them outside, but they can still come right back and occupy the same space. Government agents claim they want to help run our affairs. It'd be a good idea for them to see whether dummies wouldn't make good cowhands. I know I've seen a lot of cowhands that'd make good dummies.

Six un-papered aliens did hit here this spring in time for lamb marking. They came to complete their winter hibernation before the harvest work started in the farming country. Un-papered aliens do that nowadays .. They like to vacation in the ranchlands for a short spell, then move on to the farms to work. Like the bears and the reptiles, the first few weeks they're out of their dens they have terrific appetites and a very low interest in any form of physical exertion. Farmers should some day take the time to write us a few thank you notes. We have been doing a splendid job of preconditioning their men.

It had been a long time since any southern secretaries had been by here, so the first day of their visit was spent gathering camp equipment and groceries. The second day didn't count because they were too footsore to do much. And on the third day, the Border Patrol picked up the whole crew, leaving a dirty camp and \$65 worth of non-returnable groceries as a memory.

The deal appeared to be a big loser until news leaked at the coffee house why the Border Patrol had made this sudden raid. You see, the green shirts had been over at one of the neighbor's places, helping him crank a gasoline engine, before they'd hit the ranch.

Nobody has to be told how out of sorts cranking a gasoline engine will make a man. Twisting one of those sputter and promise machines will make the most patient fellow on this earth meaner than a bathtub full of stinging scorpions. Indoor plumbing is

the only match for gasoline engines. Neither unbroke mules from Mexico, nor wild crocodiles from the Florida swamps are as exasperating as these devil-designed devices can be. Mad women can't be as impossible as a confounded John Brown, inbred one cycle engine. I don't care what you come up with in the line of disagreeable things, a gasoline motor is the champion of them all.

As soon as I get time, I'm going to call for a cash settlement on this incident. The Border Patrol is devoted enough to their work without my neighbors stirring them up. The Paradise Islands wouldn't have any peace if folks had the law cranking their motor boats. It's a wonder something more serious didn't develop from the deal.

While Washington is considering revising the labor laws, they should consider a maximum output clause. However, I imagine it'll end up like everything else that's come from up there. One side will be eating the watermelon and we'll be eating the rind.